



NEWS RELEASE

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Online Registration Opens for SBA's National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo

Events to Take Place September 17-19

WASHINGTON - Online registration is now available for the U.S. Small Business Administration's annual celebration honoring America's top entrepreneurs and the *National Small Business Person of the Year*.

The SBA's National Entrepreneurial Conference & Expo (NECE), in Washington, D.C., September 17-19, 2003, is being held in conjunction with a series of events throughout the country to mark the SBA's 50th anniversary.

"The SBA is proud to honor the men and women whose hard work, entrepreneurial spirit and perseverance have helped to create jobs and to fuel the economy," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "Small business plays a vital role in creating opportunities for millions of Americans, and these successful small business owners deserve recognition for their achievements."

Business owners and other individuals interested in taking part in NECE may now register for events online at <http://www.sba.gov/50/>. Complete information about the Expo and the SBA's 50th anniversary events is available on the SBA's conference Web site. The site will be updated regularly with new event information.

The three-day SBA event, to be held at the Washington Hilton & Towers hotel, will feature award ceremonies and presentations by notable speakers from industry and government on issues of vital interest to the small business community, including a *Celebrating Women in Business* event recognizing the contributions of women business owners. A small business "Hall of Fame," honoring the highest achievements in entrepreneurialism, will be inaugurated during the conference.

The *National Small Business Person of the Year* will be selected from among 50 state Small Business Persons of the Year, plus one each from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Two runners-up will also be named.

The Expo also will offer a series of business sessions designed to provide small businesses with useful, practical and tangible advice, assistance and insight, including Managing Your Business, Emerging Markets, Procurement Opportunities, Small Business Financing, eBusiness, International Trade, Tax Relief, Health Care, Contingency Planning, Veteran Business Development and Leadership.

This year's conference features a Procurement Matchmaking event that will bring together prime and sub-contractors with small businesses to make business deals, as well as an Expo featuring over 175 exhibitors, including small businesses, corporate entities, international interests, and federal and state governments.

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